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## THE GUANO ISLANDS.

FIFTEEN miles from the land, with the islands enveloped in a haze, and the shipping still invisible, and yet a strong 'Paracca' breeze blowing off the coast, carried out to sea such clouds of fine impalpable dust, and brought with it such a strong ammoniacal odour, as left no doubt in our minds that the Guano Islands were close at hand. The sea, too, even at this distance from the shore, was covered with innumerable pelicans, engaged in their piscatory avocations, who seemed to have become so accustomed to the shipping, that they scarcely shifted their course to avoid it. As we drew further in, the outline of the islands, and some two hundred ships, became well defined; and nearer still, we could see most distinctly with a glass a multitude of human beings like so many ants going to and fro, as they moved their load from one spot to another, where it was more accessible for shipment. The Chincha or Guano Islands are three in number; the largest, opposite which we lay, was covered with the greatest amount of this deposit, and had been most worked; the second was somewhat less, but scarcely any guano had ever been removed from it; and the third was by much the smallest, and contained very little of this substance.

Besides these, we noticed at a short distance the San Gallan group, having similar deposits, and the little island of Blanco, deriving its name from the glistening white appearance which its surface presents in the sun. As these islands are distant from twelve to fifteen miles from the shore, and rise so abruptly from the deep, that large vessels, over 1000 tons register, can be brought close alongside them, there is, with the exception of one spot, no shelving beach, and, consequently, the mode of access to the island is very peculiar. Over the face of the rock, some thirty or forty feet high, is suspended a chain-ladder, exchanged above, where there is no friction, for a stout hempen one. To the foot of this the boat is brought, and each party in his turn grasps hold of the chain, and mounts to the landing-place above. This is easy enough when the sea is perfectly smooth, but on this coast there is not unfrequently a tremendous surf, which, rising and falling several feet in a minute against the steep face of the rock, demands great agility in leaping from the boat on to the ladder. At the landing-place, two of the soldiers of republican Peru kept guard, in order to prevent any of the convicts, who are sent here for penal servitude by their government, or the Chinese, who are nominally free labourers, but actually in most abject slavery, from escaping; and a little to the side

stood the guard-house, or relieving quarters of these troops.

From this landing-place, we ascended a wooden ladder to that part of the island where operations are at present carried on, and at the head stood a wooden erection, the house of the *commandante* of the island and his sub-officials, who receive all dues levied on vessels anchoring here, and regulate the order in which each shall ship its cargo; and this order, which should be regulated by the date of arrival, the quiet suggestion of a sovereign or two has a wonderful effect in altering. Leaving these head-quarters of the government, we strolled over the island; not a blade of grass, not a vestige of anything green, was visible; nothing but a dry parched surface formed the soil, and a dusty ammoniacal air the atmosphere, of this ancient dunghill. A little to the right, we came upon a collection of low miserable bamboo huts, the odour from which perfectly overpowered the much more pleasant effluvia of ammonia.

Peering into one or two of these wretched dwellings, we readily recognised, in all their squalid filth, the deluded subjects of the Celestial Empire, who, seduced from their own country under the belief that they were engaged to work among sugar-canes or on gold-fields, for a fixed term of five years or so only, after which they would be free, are here prisoners for life. Now, though we ourselves were eye-witnesses of this oppressive servitude, we would wish our readers to accept with caution such facts as did not come under our immediate observation, since they present features as appalling as any mentioned by Mrs Stowe in her vivid delineation of negro slavery. None can object to the Peruvian government turning its convict population to account, by making them quarry the deposits on these islands; but when a Chinaman sets foot here, we are assured he never returns to his own country, and that no less than 4000 have been transported hither at one time or another. They receive as pay a *real*, or sixpence a day, of which, however, one half is paid to the *commandante* of the island, and they are supposed to live and clothe themselves on the remainder. The labour exacted for this remuneration is a ton-weight of guano, excavated with the usual pick and shovel, since this deposit becomes from long exposure, the imbibition of night-dews, &c., tolerably consolidated. Removing it in barrows, these are again emptied into trucks, which are run on an extemporary rail to the edge of the cliff, where they are capsize, and their contents shot down a long wide tube into the hold of the ship, or her long-boat. Whenever the prescribed amount has been removed, the subject of the Celestial Empire is at liberty for the day; and many a time have we

watched these unfortunate beings, when the allotted task was done, come down to the edge of the water, and, stripping off their cotton tunics, immerse themselves in the sea, and strive to wash themselves free of the powdery filth of the day's work.

It was currently reported that, a few days prior to our arrival, the commandante of the island had three of these refractory diggers flogged so severely that they died in a few hours after; and it is well known that, to escape so galling a bondage, some have poisoned themselves with opium, some have allowed themselves to be buried alive in the very material they were working in, and others, choosing a more easy form of death, have jumped off the rocks into the sea, and drowned themselves. Whether owing to a knowledge of these sad facts, or from an experience of the frightful massacres so often occurring on board ships freighted with Chinese emigrants, we know that at one time her Majesty's government declared that they should not be carried in British bottoms, consequently, most of the Celestials whom we have seen arrive in Australian ports, *en route* for the gold-fields, have been brought thither in American ships; and during the passage it has frequently happened that the crew were obliged to retreat to the after-end of the ship, and could only trim the sails, or work the vessel, by going forward in a body, provided with cutlasses and pistols, while the front of the poop was armed with double-shotted caronades.

At a little distance from these wretched dwellings was situated another wooden erection, the hospital, supported by the Peruvian government, probably more from the politic principle of losing as few workers as possible, than from any charitable feeling for their sufferings. Introducing ourselves to the medical superintendent, a German, he shewed us round his ward, which constituted the whole hospital, comprising about ten beds, occupied mainly by patients suffering from indolent sores, produced by poor diet, a fever case or two, and one accident, where a truck had run over a man's leg. The building was of the most primitive kind possible, and the whole internal arrangements were of the most niggardly description. As we extended our walk, we came round to the back of the island, where the deposit is much less in thickness—that on the side next the shipping being roughly estimated at fifty feet deep, comprising upwards of seventeen millions of tons—and fell in with a gaily decorated wooden shed, hung with silks, and displaying brilliant flags. We did not go in, but saw that the entrance, which was adorned with curtains, was occupied by a counter, behind which were standing two Chinese gorgeously dressed, evidently masters of the ceremonies; the rest of the building was in like manner filled with counters and forms. At first, we supposed that this was a joss-house, or place intended for the celebration of the religious services of the Chinese; but a gentleman who was with us, and had often been on the island before, informed us that it was a gambling-house, and that the proprietor had amassed no less a sum than two thousand dollars out of the miserable pittance paid to his brother-workers.

At one end of the island is set apart an acre or so of guano, under the designation of a cemetery, intended for the use of sailors who may die here, but without the slightest enclosure, either wooden fence or stone wall. It was certainly the most wretched necropolis we ever saw: not a tree, not a vestige of adornment of any kind distinguished this hallowed patch; nor is it certain that the Peruvian government will respect the spot when the supply of guano becomes scarce. Would it not have been better to have adopted the plan followed when at sea, and committed the dead to the deep, instead of burying them in a heap of manure? Or, better still, to have interred them in

the hold of the ship, as was done with the body of the captain of the *A*—during the time we lay there, since the antiseptic qualities of the guano will keep the remains entire for months, until they can obtain more decent burial. As we stepped over one or two mounds which alone indicated the presence of the dead, we noticed at the head of others small wooden tablets, carved with the name, age, and occupation of the deceased, which was always that either of a petty-officer or common seaman.

It is a well-known fact, that guano may be met with in nearly all parts of the world, but that whenever the rain falls, it is washed away. Much of Peru, however, is situated in what geographers call the rainless region of the earth; consequently, this deposit has been accumulating for ages, probably several thousand years, and rain never falling, or else so sparingly as to be hailed by the inhabitants as *agua benedicta* (holy-water), has never been swept off. On inspecting the surface, this substance appears to be of a light brownish hue; lower down, the colour deepens to a dark brown, and the layers next the rock are generally of a dusky red. The bones of seals, the wings, and even entire birds, are often met with while excavating—occurrences which have given rise to the idea among those who frequent the islands, that guano is not so much formed of the excrement as of the decomposed bodies of these animals.

As a manure, guano has been but comparatively recently employed in England, but it would seem to have been used as such by the Peruvians from the age of the Incas downwards. In 1839, the government of Peru sold to Messrs Quiros, Allier, & Co., of Lima, for the trifling sum of about ten thousand pounds, the sole right to ship guano during a period of nine years. As they, however, soon after saw that they had committed a grievous error towards the state in thus willing away a privilege of the value of which they were totally ignorant, they cancelled this contract in 1841, and for several years the trade was free, till they again gave a monopoly to the Messrs Gibbs & Sons of London. Much attention having, however, of late been bestowed on the manufacture of artificial manures, the demand for this substance has not been so great. In order that the continuance of deposit may not be interfered with, the Peruvian government strictly forbid the use of firearms in the vicinity of the islands; but the number of men now employed upon them have completely driven the birds away, who now resort to the islands of San Gallan and Blanco, and the mainland. This cessation of feud between man and the lower animals of creation is still more extended in its effects, for the seals, which here abound in thousands, and receive the benefit of this act of grace, as supposed co-labourers with the birds in the formation of this valuable material, come bobbing up around the boat in dozens at a time, while immense whales gambol about among the shipping, spouting their water on board without being the least afraid of their sworn foe.

As the Chinchas rise most abruptly from the sea, a peculiar method of shipment has to be adopted. From the top of the cliff, a long and wide canvas shoot or tube, called a *manguerra*, one hundred and fifty feet long, by six to eight in diameter, is securely fastened, and the lower end placed in the hold of the long-boat. When the word is given that all is in readiness, two or three truck-loads are shot down, until that boat has received its quantum; when, as it shoves off, another party lay hold of the end of the canvas shoot, and when they have received their load, another, and another, till all are filled. If, however, the higher officials of the Peruvian government on the island do not scruple to regulate the order of supply to each vessel by the amount of the bribe given, neither does the man who has charge of the *manguerra* forget to

suggest that he, too, has his price; for when the long-boat of the ship we were in went for their cargo, though first at the shoot, they were put off to the last, and made aware of the reason by a voice shouting down the tube: 'What for master not send me old coat, boots, and hat?' Sometimes, however, a much more expeditious method of shipment is adopted. The vessel is brought quite close alongside, some thirty or forty yards from the rocks, immediately under the mangueria—a matter of no difficulty as regards the depth, here generally from fifteen to thirty fathoms—and being securely swung broadside on to the island (though in such a precarious position, that with each roll of the surf she sways to and fro so much that the tops of her masts nearly touch the rocks), the lower end of the shoot is received into the hold of the ship, and being fed all day long with trucks of guano from above, will take in (we are told) four hundred tons in a day. Thus, in three or four days, a fourteen-hundred ton ship is filled and despatched.

The delay, however, occasioned by inefficient means of supply is very great, so much so, that three or four months is no unusual period of detention. During this time, masters and officers of ships amuse themselves by catching fish, which used to be so plentiful as to be obtainable in boat-loads, and which of course constitute the food of the innumerable millions of birds which swarm along this coast, and literally darken the sky.

We ourselves having been detained there a fortnight, waiting the arrival of the Pacific Mail Company's steamer, took the opportunity of visiting the mainland at Pisco, a miserable collection of bamboo stuccoed huts, situated nearly opposite the islands. Not trusting to the accommodation to be found in so reecheré a Peruvian city, noted, however, for its wine, we took a tent with us, and camping under some palm-trees at a well, situated like an oasis in the middle of a sandy desert, made sundry excursions along the coast, destroying large numbers of birds, principally of a duck species, which proved excellent eating. On one occasion, extending our journey into the interior a little, we came upon a mound of dead bodies, evidently those of coloured people, as betokened by the skin of the hands and feet, which, though parched and dry, were still entire. The skulls, made perfectly brittle by long exposure to a burning sun and dry atmosphere, lay on the surface in dozens; and the cotton tunics of the former wearers were fluttering about in the air, where the wind had drifted them bare of sand; but whether this was only the hurried entombment of those who had fallen victims to the plague, or been killed in some of their intestine struggles, we could not learn.

A favourite excursion was to the islands of San Gallan and Blanco, whither the birds and seals, formerly inhabiting the Chinchas, have now repaired. The latter are nearly as numerous as the former, and may be seen basking on the rocks in thousands, affording subject of sport for an expert shot, as they come sliding, slipping, and splashing into the water in dozens on the report of a rifle. We reserved the skin and fat, the latter being turned into oil, and left the carcass to be consumed by the turkey vultures and others of that species, who form the scavengers of Peru, as the adjutants do of India.

Unimportant as Pisco is, the fleet around, and the labourers of the Guano Islands, could not exist without it, since every morsel of food, and every drop of water required by them, has to be brought from there—a distance of twelve miles—by large boats, which start in the morning, and return again in the afternoon. It is almost impossible, without visiting these islands, to form an idea of their unique appearance. This barren rock, whose soil—the solidified excrement of myriads of sea-fowls for many ages—produces not a blade of grass, nor gives origin to a rill of water, is certainly a fitting spot in which the

convict may eke out his lifetime of servitude; but also one where the tyranny of man may condemn to perpetual slavery his fellow-man, without fearing the inquiries of the philanthropist.

#### SIR FRANCIS ON THE HORSE.

It has of late become the fashion with not a few of those authors who have earned a great and deserved reputation among us by their wit and humour, their eloquence, or their powers of story-telling, to take to didactic writing, or, in other words, to lecturing the British public pretty severely. The offices of the parson and the political economist are usurped by these lay-preachers. The cap and bells are laid aside, the white bands decorously adopted, and Mr Liston plays, at length, with greater or less success, his long-desired part of the Prince of Denmark. Sir Francis Head of the *Brunnen* and the *Emigrant*, of the *French Sticks* and of *Stokers and Pokers*, is the latest addition to this band of volunteer Teachers. Other authors have confined themselves to teaching, after various fashions, the young idea to shoot; but the baronet has gone a step further in his present volume,\* by teaching both old and young among us how to ride. There is a portrait, we suppose of Sir Francis himself, but which exceedingly resembles Mr Bright, M.P., prefixed to these pages, and representing a gentleman crossing the Andes mounted upon a Red Indian, with the not unnatural query written under it, 'Which is the *savage*?' but in the letterpress, our author confines himself exclusively to the Horse. This animal has been an inhabitant of almost every region of the earth, and in all ages. His teeth lie in the polar ice, not for anæsthetic purposes, but because, when he was alive, he dwelt there in company with the Siberian mammoth; in the Himalaya with lost and only lately obtained genera; and in the caverns of Ireland. His bones rest, unless when the geologist sacrilegiously disturbs them, with those of the Mastodon and the colossal Urs. Unlike these, however, he remains on the earth's surface as well as under it. He is found in all history, sacred, profane, and modern; sharing in the conquests and defeats, the occupations and amusements of man. When the famine was sore in the land of Egypt, the Egyptians gave him unto Joseph in exchange for bread. He was overthrown with his rider in the Red Sea. He was rampant at Nineveh and in the Acropolis of Athens, as we see in the friezes; and we have got him in half the squares of London with a king on his back. He is the current gift of friendship which is offered to one another by kings up to this day, and he is worthy to be so. And yet how vilely the majority of men, from kings to tailors, treat him in return! It is true such persons are not aware of the cruelty they are committing, and it is to remind the thoughtless, and to instruct the ignorant, that Sir Francis Head has written this book.

There is no subject, says he, connected with this matter so worthy of consideration, most especially to any man wearing the name of a gentleman, as the use and abuse of Spurs. Whatever is to be said—and that is very little—in favour of spurs in the case of animals that have been roaming in a state of nature, that have never tasted corn, or been excited to race against one another, and, consequently, that cannot be induced to exhaust in man's service the *whole* of their strength, except by punishment, with English horses the conditions are quite different. 'Tied to mangers, in which they feast on dry oats, beans, and hay, no sooner do they leave their stables than the very sight of creation animates them; every carriage that trots by, and every rider that passes, excites them. When brought into condition, and then encouraged to

\* *The Horse and his Rider*. By Sir Francis B. Head, Bart. Murray, London.





of work, his spirits, like the hair-trigger of a rifle, are prepared on the smallest touch to cause a very violent explosion. In fact, without metaphor, on the slightest occurrence, he is not only ready, but exceedingly desirous to jump for joy. The *cansu belli* which the animal would perhaps most enjoy, would be to meet a temperance runaway awning-covered wagon full of stout, healthy young women in hysterics, all screaming; or to have a house fall down just as he was passing it. However, as a great conqueror, if he cannot discover a large excuse for invading the territory of his neighbour, is sure to pick out a very little one, so does the high-mettled horse, who has nothing to start at, proceed under his rider with his eyes searching in all directions for something which he may pretend to be afraid of. Influenced by these explosive propensities, he cocks his ears at a large leaf which the air had gently roused from its sleep, as if it were a crouching tiger; and shortly afterwards, a fore-leg drops under him as suddenly as if it had been carried away by a cannon-shot, because, in the hedge beside him, a wren has just hopped from one twig to another nearly an inch.

'Now, of course, the effective cure for all these symptoms of exuberant, pent-up spirits is a long, steady hand-gallop up and down hill across rather deep ground. Before, however, this opportunity offers, man can offer to the brute beneath him a more reasonable remedy. The instant that a horse at a walk sees at a short distance before him, say a heap of stones, at which he pretends to be, or really is afraid, instead of forcing him on, he should be allowed, or, if it be necessary, forced to stop, not only till he has ceased to fear it, but until, dead tired of looking at it, he averts his eyes elsewhere. While advancing towards it, so often as his fear, or pretended fear, breaks out, by instantly bringing him to a stand-still, it should in like manner be over-appeared.'

The serious advice in this volume is pleasantly interspersed with anecdotes of *le premier chasseur d'Angleterre*, as Napoleon called him, or *le grand chasseur Smit*, as he was termed by the Parisians, that prince of foxhunters, Thomas Assheton Smith. Many a time has the writer of this notice seen that fine old English gentleman among his favourites at Tedworth, where every hunter—and he had often as many as fifty in first-rate condition—had a loose box to himself. At sixty-four, he brought his hounds for one day, by invitation, to Leicestershire, which he had in old times hunted himself, and no less than *two thousand* horsemen, one-third of whom were in pink, attended to do him honour. Until eighty years of age, this veteran continued to hunt, although his meets were curtailed to four a week, to vault on horseback as usual, blow his horn while his horse was carrying him over a five-barred gate, and with a loose rein, gallop down the sheep-fed hill-sides with all the alacrity of a boy. Since Mrs Smith's health was delicate, 'he had "brought Madeira to England," by constructing for her at Tedworth a magnificent conservatory or crystal palace, 315 feet in length, and 40 in width, in which, enjoying the temperature of a warm climate, she might take walking-exercise during the winter months. A Wiltshire farmer, on first seeing this building, observed, he supposed it was for the 'squire to hunt there whenever a frost stopped him in the field. "It was a melancholy spectacle," writes Sir J. Eardley Wilmot, "to see Tom Smith the winter before his death, when he could no longer join his hounds, mount one of his favourite hunters—Euxine, Paul Potter, or Blemish—with the assistance of a chair, and take his exercise for an hour at a foof's pace up and down this conservatory, often with some friend at his side to cheer him up and while away the time until he re-entered the house, for he was not allowed at that period to go out

of doors. Even in this feeble condition, *quantum mutatus ab illo Hectore*, once on horseback, he appeared to revive; and the dexterity and ease with which he managed, like a plaything, the spirited animal under him, which had scarcely left its stable for months, was most surprising.'

All that a man could do, with intention, upon a horse's back, Assheton Smith could do; but the present Major-general Yorke Moore did, unintentionally, even a greater thing than he. He rode a horse, at Dominica, in the West Indies, down a sheer precipice 237 feet high, and is now alive and well to tell the story, which we regret there is no room for in our columns. The man recovered from the shock, the horse it was that died.

It is not generally known that the practice of lasso-draught has been in vogue in the British army, as the following extract from the *Queen's Regulations* informs us. 'In order that the cavalry may, upon emergencies, be available for the purposes of draught, such as assisting artillery, &c., through deep roads, and in surmounting other impediments and obstacles which the carriages of the army have frequently to encounter in the course of active service, ten men per troop are to be equipped with the tackle of the lasso.' The Royal Engineer Train—who have also adopted the South American system of 'hobbling' their horses, at the instigation of our author—have demonstrated by public experiments in this country, that with this simple equipment of the lasso, 'which would injure neither the efficiency nor the appearance of the cavalry, any number of horses, whether accustomed to draught or not, are capable of being at once harnessed to any description of carriage, not only in front to draw it forward, but in rear to hold it back, or even sideways to prevent its upsetting—in short, that it is a power which can be made to radiate in any direction.' There need be, therefore, no more heavy guns sticking in quagmires, with friendly cavalry looking on, with plenty of power to help them, but no means, as was so often the case in the Peninsular War.

Finally, Sir Francis appeals with just indignation against the inhumanity of burning a horse's sinews, and cutting out his nerves, without the merciful aid of chloroform.

'You are a man of *pleasure*,' says he—'save your horse from unnecessary *pain*. You are a man of business—inscribe in that ledger in which every one of the acts of your life is recorded, on one side how much *he* will gain, and on the other, *per contrâ*, how very little *you* will lose, by the evaporation of a fluid that will not cost you the price of the shoes of the poor animal whose marketable value you have determined, by excruciating agony *to him*, to increase.' The excellent sense and judgment, indeed, which distinguish Sir Francis Head's advice throughout this volume, are not more worthy of consideration than his enlightened humanity, which deserves a special medal from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to the Brute Creation.

## THE FAMILY SCAPEGRACE.

CHAPTER III.—USCLE INGRAM.

MR INGRAM ARBOUR's estimation of his sentimental brother's prudence and sagacity had not been, as we have seen, a high one; and he had expressed an unpleasant foreboding concerning that family, between whom and the workhouse of their native parish only some three thousand pounds did now in reality intervene: but the astute merchant had miscalculated matters in one very important particular. He had taken it for granted that Benjamin, who was his junior by many years, would outlive him. He had prophesied future misfortunes with all the unctious of a Metternich, under the comfortable impression that the Deluge would take place after his own time. But

Benjamin being dead, Uncle Ingram was become the natural guardian of his widow and children; a position which his sturdy sense of right caused him to accept at once and unsolicited. This respectable Christian merchant, therefore, found himself in a worse predicament than any of those ancient Jews whose piety compelled them to marry their childless sisters-in-law. He had to maintain Mrs Benjamin Arbour without marrying her, as well as her children, from No. 1 to No. 5 inclusive. Except, therefore, for his great reputation for caution, he might just as well have married when his brother did, and have possessed half-a-dozen children of his own.

This reflection was scarcely a soothing one, even if Mr Ingram Arbour had been capable of being soothed by a reflection—which he was not. He was a man who did his duty, but without, by any means, denying himself the pleasure of grumbling at it. He would give, and largely, to whomsoever he judged to have a just claim upon him, but he could not be said to be a cheerful giver. Benevolence was with him a mere business transaction, effected out of office-hours, and any act of it had no more accompaniment of delicacy or kindness from him, than if it had been the discounting of a bill. He took things, in general, and prided himself in doing so, for 'what they were worth'—by which he meant rather what they would 'fetch,' if exposed for sale. He was not, in short, quite the man to be selected to say grace before an indifferent dinner, and far less after one; and that he openly thanked God for having blessed him in the basket and in the store, was the more praiseworthy, since he had a secret conviction that his success had been entirely owing to his own sagacity.

Such was the man who was seated in the little drawing-room of Rose Cottage on a certain July evening after Dick's christening; and we are introduced to him at a most favourable time, for he had just dined, and dined well, and had within him a bottle of poor Benjy's best port, which the widow had carefully selected for him. She had done so with no intention beyond that of hospitality, but Uncle Ingram was far too clever to believe it. 'Mrs B. is not such a fool as she looks,' was the doubtful compliment he had conferred in his own mind upon that lady; although he did not spurn the supposed medium of conciliation by any means. On the contrary, he had set the last glass of it between the light and his own eyes in an admiring manner, with various guttural noises expressive of approval, and only qualified a satisfactory smack of the lips when it was done, by muttering an anxious hope that his deceased brother had paid for it. After which, he had risen from the table, pulled up his shirt-collar, cleared his throat, in preparation for the business statement he was come down from town to enter upon, corrugated his eyebrows, in order to forbid contradiction, and joined his expectant sister-in-law in the drawing-room.

This was a bow-windowed apartment, with the three sashes at present thrown open—for it was a somewhat oppressive, though lovely evening—and the pleasant breeze from the river brought through them the beat of oars, from the frequent pleasure-boats coming from or returning to the neighbouring town, and even the splash of the fish, as they leaped out of the smooth but rapid current. A little island, fringed with willows, immediately fronted the cottage, hiding from it the main channel, the noise of whose passing barges and barges came mellowed and expurgated by distance; while in the near stream, a punt lay moored, filled with quiet anglers; and three milk-white swans now pruned their feathers, and now exhibited themselves with their heads under water, and their opposite extremities, like gigantic lily-buds, perpendicularly in air. In the foreground, six clean stone steps led from the mid-window to a sloping lawn, terminating in a wooden terrace, on which were some half-dozen flower-

baskets full of red geraniums, and a sun-dial, curiously carved. It was a charming scene, but one which did not jar the less on that account on him who now beheld it. He did not see it for the first time, it is true, since he had more than once visited the cottage—under protest, and always with sundry expressions of contempt for that fairy bower—but its quiet beauty had never struck him so deeply before.

'What right,' thought he, 'had that brother of mine, with his large family and small income, to have such a place as this? How much better it is than that great dingy house of my own in Golden Square. Those flower-baskets must have cost a pretty penny when they were new, I reckon. If I had the right of fishing in this water, I'd startle those poaching vagabonds out in that punt there, pretty quick. That island must be worth something when it isn't under water, which it is six months of the year or so, I believe; but it's no good asking Mrs B. whether osiers are up or not just now, I daresay. If that swan has cygnets on it, I should like to know who claims, the proprietor of the land, or the London Company? I daresay, Benjamin never tried that question.'

'Brother Ingram,' observed a musical but melancholy voice, breaking in upon these romantic meditations, 'will you take a cup of tea now, or will you smoke a cigar? You must not mind me, you know: my dear Benjy often used to smoke here in evenings such as this.'

'So much the worse for him, madam,' returned Ingram Arbour; 'I daresay he hastened his end by that deleterious practice. I am sure he helped to ruin himself by it—to ruin himself, madam.'

By the repetition of the word 'ruin,' and by conjuring up before his mind's eye a vision of poverty and destitution, Mr Arbour contrived to convince himself that he was behaving with a sternness only proportionate to the circumstances of the case; just as one might call up the atrocities of Delhi or Cawnpore, to justify one's self for committing an unprovoked assault upon a Hindu crossing-sweeper.

The idea of impecuniosity always stirred Mr Ingram Arbour's bile, just as that of cruelty or oppression arouses the indignation of less commercial persons.

'Why, good Heavens, madam,' continued he, worked up into a sort of temporary jaundice by these judicious reflections, 'that man ought to have died worth five-and-twenty thousand pounds, if he had not been an idiot. That is to say, I mean,' added he, observing a faint flush to rise in his sister-in-law's cheeks, 'if he had not been so unbusiness-like and careless. It was not my affair of course, and I always make it a point not to meddle with other people's af— Hi, you fellows in that punt,' roared Mr Ingram Arbour, interrupting himself with a jerk, and approaching the window, 'how do you dare to use a net in this water, you poaching scoundrels? Upon my sacred word of honour, Mrs Arbour, they are using a net!'

'Hush, Brother Ingram,' entreated his sister-in-law; 'pray, be quiet; it's only a landing-net; it is only to pull the fish up after they have been hooked.'

'I don't care what sort of a net it is,' stormed the stickler for the rights of property; 'the law says "a net," and they have no right to use a butterfly-net there, without your permission. What is the scoundrel saying, madam—the poacher in the white straw-hat? What is he saying in reply to my question?'

'I can't hear quite distinctly,' replied the widow, biting her lips; 'but it is something about the Emperor of Morocco, I am afraid, and their most respectful compliments.'

'Then they are absolutely laughing at me,' quoth Ingram Arbour, 'are they? They have chosen me, of all men, to be the subject of their senseless ribaldry. Will you kindly favour me with the name of one of those individuals, madam? Any one will do.'

'I don't know the person in the straw-hat, Brother



Ingram, replied his sister-in-law with hesitation; 'they are doubtless towns-people, who have taken the boat for the evening.'

'You know the fisherman—the man who owns the boat,' returned the other stubbornly. 'I must have that fisherman's name, if you please, and at once.'

'It was not his fault, brother,' urged the widow pleadingly; 'he could not prevent the persons who had employed him from being impertinent; he is a very well-conducted'—

'One moment, if you please,' replied her brother-in-law, interrupting her curtly. 'Come here, Adolphus; I want to speak to you.'

The boy was ducking his brother and sisters with the garden-engine, but desisted from that occupation, and came obedient to his uncle's call, with downcast eyes.

'Please, sir, it wasn't me began it,' whined he, in a deprecating voice; 'it was Johnnie and Maria, especially Johnnie.'

'That's a lie,' returned Uncle Ingram with composure, 'for I've been watching you: and, mind you, never tell me a lie again. Who is that fisherman yonder, and where does he live?'

'His name is John Wilson, and he lives in our cottage down the stream yonder.'

'A very hard-working honest fellow, with a large family,' added Mrs Arbour.

'But he ain't paid his rent, you know, mother,' observed Adolphus cunningly; 'because I heard you tell him yesterday that next month would do.'

'That's a sharp lad,' remarked Uncle Ingram approvingly; 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating, ain't it, boy? You may go away now, for your mother and I are going to have some talk—that is to say, if it be agreeable to you, Letitia?'

'My ears are at your service, brother, to receive whatever you may please to say; but I have little to tell you, I fancy, which you do not already know.'

'I know a few things relating to practical matters,' returned the other, with a little mollification of manner; 'and I generally manage to obtain what information I am in want of; and he entered the name of John Wilson into his pocket-book, and shut the clasp with a snap. 'Now, then, to business, madam. One thousand insurance, and two thousand in the three per cents. is, I believe, the total figure which represents your property—all in the world which you and your children have to look to—with the exception of this cottage and garden, yonder island, and right of fishing (I'll net them, the scoundrels, as sure as my name is Ingram Arbour), and the cottage of that man Wilson (I'll cottage him, I reckon, in a manner that shall astonish him), with three or four hundred feet of osier-bank thereto appertaining.'

'That, I believe, is all, brother.'

'Excuse me; you don't believe it; you're sure of it. There's nothing like positive certainty in matters of this kind. You are sure that this is all that lies between you and the— Well, you may thank your stars that there was but one fool in my family! If I died to-morrow, there would be something like ten times this beggarly pittance left for my widow; that is to say, if I had been weak enough to possess one. Now, I dare say, you think me an unsympathising bear, madam—a rude, mercantile old hunk, without the least generous or charitable feelings about him. Now, don't say you don't, Letitia, because I know you do. I say you would much rather see me dead and well "cut up," with my money neatly divided among my nephews and nieces, than sitting here, with my feet upon your sofa, giving you unpalatable advice; and you needn't say you don't, because such a remark would not impress me with an idea of your good sense or veracity. Well, notwithstanding all this, you will find me behave as handsomely, perhaps, in the main, and practically, madam—practically—as any sentimental benevolence-monger of your or any other

woman's acquaintance. I am come down here expressly to accept the guardianship of yourself and your family.'

'God bless you, Brother Ingram,' murmured the widow tremulously. 'My dearest Benjy always told me'—

'Then, if he did, madam,' interrupted the other, 'although I do not know what he told you in this particular instance, take my advice, and forget it from this moment. Benjamin was not the sort of man to make observations to be remembered. The chances are fifty to one that the remark which you were about to repeat is destitute of practical truth.'

'He always told me, I was going to say, brother, that you had a good heart at bottom, although you took a strange pleasure in concealing the fact from your fellow-creatures.'

'Then all I can say, madam, is,' replied the unabashed merchant, 'that such a statement of your late husband regarding me was a most unwarrantable impertinence. However, what I have got to say is this: These children of yours must not be brought up in idleness. You must be content to live in a style quite different from that to which you have been hitherto accustomed. I daresay, you will think it very hard if I say, you must leave this cottage, this scene, these comforts, and exchange them for indifferent quarters—in the neighbourhood of Golden Square, for instance.'

'I am prepared for any sacrifice, Brother Ingram.'

'Sacrifice! madam—why, the woman's mad!—I speak of a necessity. When starvation looks in at the window, and the sheriff's officer comes to the back-door, the debtor is not said to make a sacrifice, I reckon, although his goods are generally sold at one.'

Mrs Benjamin Arbour was not in sufficiently good spirits to appreciate this *jeu d'esprit* as it deserved, but her brother-in-law enjoyed it hugely. When dull men do make a joke, however feeble, they are not apt to let it escape in a hurry, but mouth it about as a child does a lollipop, until the observers are sometimes a little sick of the exhibition; but, on the other hand, its effect is mollifying to the dull man. Mr Ingram Arbour was positively charmed with this *bon-mot* of his, which was not the first by one which he had indulged in for the last five-and-forty years.

'You know goods are said to be sold at a tremendous sacrifice,' observed he in explanation.

Whereat Mrs Benjamin, good lying woman, affected to see the matter in its proper humorous light, and laughed after a fashion that nature doubtless resented bitterly.

'What I was going to say,' continued she, 'was, that I would leave the cottage to-morrow, if you thought it right or expedient that I should do so, Brother Ingram; although, of course, the memories and associations that hang around this place'—

'Well, madam, for my part,' interrupted the merchant, 'I only believe in those sort of fixtures of which the house-agent can make some valuation. It may or may not be as you say; but these sofas are better than horse-hair ones, and it is pleasanter to be your own mistress than at the mercy of some drunken lodging-housekeeper, anyway. Therefore, I say, stop at Rose Cottage if you will, madam, and keep your girls and younger boys about you. Nay, Letitia, I want no thanks; and, indeed, you might have stopped here without my permission, as far as that goes, until your three thousand pounds had dwindled away to nothing. However, I'll see that that doesn't happen, if you'll only leave matters entirely in my hands. Adolphus shall return to town with me, and begin work in my office at once; and the other boys may follow him in time—if you are not too proud, that is, to permit the young gentlemen to engage in mercantile pursuits. You have a hundred a year of your own to spend, mind, and if your outgoings should

come to double that sum, or even a little over, I will pay the surplus, Letitia—as your nearest relative and natural protector—out of my own pocket. Nay, madam, I am not a guardian angel, nor, as I should imagine, anything like it, and I tell you honestly that I had much rather that every person should support his own wife and children, by personal exertions when alive, and by bequest after his death; but, however others have neglected *their* duty, madam, you will not find me shirk mine.'

It may be easily imagined that the widow gratefully accepted this proposition, and gladly intrusted to Mr Ingram Arbour the treasurership of her little fortune and the control of her affairs. This matter finished, her brother-in-law was proceeding to give her his views concerning the management of her household, which, as emanating from a bachelor who had been under the conduct of housekeepers for a quarter of a century, would doubtless have proved original and interesting in a high degree, when he became suddenly conscious that the attention of Mrs Benjamin Arbour—in spite of the engrossing nature of the topic—had wandered somewhere else.

'Doubtless, madam,' he interposed, with an offended air, 'you know your own affairs best, and perhaps after all, I have been only officious in meddling with them; but I do think some little outward respect, some semblance of attention, is due.'

'Dear good Brother Ingram,' cried poor Mrs Arbour, clasping her hands in terror, but still with an air of distracted preoccupation, 'I meant no disrespect to you, our benefactor, Heaven knows; but I thought I heard my poor dear Dicky calling for his food.'

'And is it possible,' broke forth Mr Ingram Arbour, in a passion, 'that what I have to say, madam, upon *any* subject, can be of less consequence than your confounded canary and his chickweed!'

'Canary, brother! chickweed! why it's my poor little Dick wanting his mamma. Don't you hear him setting up his tiny cry?'

'Since you call my attention to it, madam,' growled the affectionate uncle, 'I am sorry to say I do. But what on earth did you give it such a name as Dick for? Luckily, we have got through all our more important business, or I do not doubt you would have left me for that little brat at any time; as he grows older he must, however, be taught to wait for his betters.—By the by, Letitia,' added Mr Ingram, as his sister-in-law was leaving the room, 'since you have given me the control of your affairs, remember that that man Wilson leaves his cottage if his rent is delayed one hour beyond the 31st of next month. I'll Emperor of Morocco him, trust me!'

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### A COMMERCIAL ACADEMY.

From babyhood to childhood, Dicky Arbour grew up the pet of the Rose Cottage household, and that notwithstanding what Nurse Rachel was wont to designate his 'little tantrums.' He was accustomed when provoked—from the age of two till four or thereabouts—to stiffen himself out like a ramrod, cast himself backwards upon the floor, without the least regard for the shock that was thereby inflicted upon his youthful head, and, in that recumbent position, to scream like a locomotive. The best cure for this malady was found to be the giving him a very soft and comfortable pillow to lie upon, and treating him, in all respects, like an elderly invalid of irritable temperament. He would then presently get up, toddle to his mother, and, hiding his curly head in her lap, observe in smothered tones: 'Me so torry, mammy; me dood now; me won't do it never no more; me won't indeed.'

Everybody said—save Sister Maria, who merely observed that he wanted whipping, and Brother Johnnie, who never expressed an opinion upon any

subject unconnected with himself—that Dicky was a charming child, and only required a little management. Doctor Neversleep in particular—who had been pressed into being his godpapa, since the vein of natural and kindred sponsors had long been exhausted in the Arbour family—took vast delight in him, and taught him many things which his mother would scarcely have thought of. From his dictation, the infant pupil learned to express astonishment and admiration in such terms as, 'O my doodney!' (for, O my goodness!), 'Idn't it dolly?' (for, Isn't it jolly?) and 'Here's a bessie dark, upon my error!' (for, Here's a blessed lark, upon my honour!) At which lisping wickednesses, mamma would hold up her finger reprovingly, and look supernaturally solemn, till the offending party destroyed her gravity by recommending Doctor Neversleep for corporal punishment instead of himself. 'Ip my naughty godpa, mammy; don't ip me.'

In due course arrived that dark hour, inevitable, as it seems, to civilised childhood, when the government of love is superseded by that of fear, and home and friends are left for school and strangers. Dick—whose knowledge of foreign languages had been confined to a little French, laid on upon him so lovingly and lightly by Sister Maggie, that it was more like French poliah—was not sent to the same seminary where Adolphus had had his mind ennobled and refined by the rudiments of classical literature, but to the commercial academy of Messrs Dot and Carriwun, of which Johnnie had been already an alumnus for several years. In establishments of the former class, the *As in presenti* is perhaps the most hateful task that is imposed upon a reasonable boy, while in those of the latter the abominable rule called *Practice* distracts the youthful mind most painfully. Well sings the Poet of Educational Life:

Multiplication is vexation;  
Addition is as bad—

for although the second statement is an exaggerated one, it is obviously only introduced with an eye to the final line, wherein lies the whole gist of the stanza:

The Rule of Three does puzzle me;  
But Practice drives me mad!

It almost drove poor Dick mad, and certainly set him violently against the profession to which such a stumbling-block was declared to be a necessary step. He would sit and suck the sponge which was attached like a horrid parasite to every slate, for hours, dreaming of his mother or foot-ball, until the cane of the wrathful pedagogue would awaken him to the real miseries of his situation—to life and aliquot parts. This 'Practice'—which never made Dick perfect—is certainly worse than the *As in presenti*, which there is no absolute necessity to understand at all. The scratch and spurt of pens, too, that pervade the school-room devoted to the more liberal studies, are far less offensive than that perpetual grind of the slate-pencils, which, greasy with tears and perspiration, have to be sharpened with the knife continually, an operation which they resent with hideous screeches. There was another method of doing this which Dick much preferred, since it was an excuse for leaving his work—retiring from Practice—and approaching the fire in cold weather: he would spit upon the end of his pencil, and grind it upon the hearthstone with much persistency, until it acquired the finest possible point; when it would break off suddenly, and then he would begin again.

What noises, what smells, what an atmosphere filled that entrance-chamber of Commercial Learning, and what a splendid vision to many young minds must have been the Junior Clerk's office that would one day receive them into its bosom, where the pedagogue ceases from troubling, and the lazy read their newspapers, for ever, over pots of half and half!



Viewed from the mercantile point of view, Richard Arbour was rather a lazy boy, it must be confessed; but beheld from the loftier elevation of Muscular Christianity, he was diligent and assiduous to a very high degree. If the playtime of boys—as is the modern faith—is of equal consequence with their schooltime, there was certainly nobody who made a more profitable use of his than Dick. He was the most distinguished foot-ball player, for his height and weight, in the establishment, and the most dreaded by the foe; for, as in mediæval warfare, the very noblest knights in armour of purest gold were liable to be miserably discomfited by half-naked wretches who would creep under their horses' bellies and stab them, so the tallest of his opponents were not seldom hurled to earth by this pigmy inserting himself between their legs. Moreover, as the aforesaid *canaillie* perilled life and limb (although, because they were not high-born, the snobbish chroniclers of the time make light of that circumstance) at least as much as the mailed knights, so Dicky Arbour would recklessly cast himself down, like some Juggernaut devotee, between the ball and any titanic foe who was about to take a good high kick at it, and receive the iron compliment in his own ribs. This is a species of devotion rarely appreciated except by one's own side. 'The ranks of Tuscany'—for school-boys are not a generous-hearted race by any means—not only 'forbear to cheer' such acts, but sometimes cherish an ignoble spite against the heroic little Roman.

Thus, Mr William Dempsey, a young man of seventeen, and the captain, upon a certain occasion, of the opposite party, took it very ill that he was not only balked of his kick, but toppled headlong all his five feet eleven of length by the intrepid and horizontal Dick. When the battle was over, and nothing beyond a little brown paper and vinegar ought to have been required by a magnanimous foe, the heart of Dempsey desired vengeance, and his hand (in a quiet way, and with no reference to foot-ball, of course) was not slow to take it upon the very first opportunity. This tyrannical conduct was resented by poor Dick, by deeds, which, measured by the indignant feelings of the doer, were tremendous, but which, physically considered, did not much hurt Dempsey, and only provoked further cruelties; and by words of the most outrageous character, which were overheard (easily enough—for Dick had the best of lungs) by the schoolmaster, and procured him a sound caning. This second wrong (as Dick considered it) smote the victim in a more sensitive part than that on which the mere blows had descended. The unfortunate lad had not a logical mind—as we have seen in his difficulty of dealing with aliquot parts—and was, moreover, too amply provided with the savage instinct called Sense of Justice, which, in the case of No. 5 of a poor family, is not a gift which a good-natured fairy would bring to a baptism. It seemed to him because Mr Carriwun had caned him for swearing without inquiry into the previous circumstances, which were such as to have made a saint swear, as poor Dick thought—who knew less about saints than if he had been brought up at Eton, where they are greatly revered, and produce half-holidays—that authority was arrayed upon the side of tyranny, and perhaps even that it was only another name for it. Mr Carriwun imagined that he was caning bad words out of the lad, when he was in reality caning bad thoughts into him. We do not say that he should not have caned him—it was bitterly cold weather, and even a schoolmaster must needs warm himself when the opportunity offers—but that he should have done something else as well. The matter being unexplained, Dick Arbour became a bad boy in the eyes of the master, while his resentful conduct against the Titan Dempsey earned him a reputation, scarce less unenviable, for 'bumptiousness' among the boys. His impatience of a tyranny under which they had all of them suffered, more or less,

without complaint, was naturally distasteful; village Hampdens are rarely popular; and to be so, it is above all things necessary that they should be successful and uncaned.

Matters being in this unfavourable position, a match at snow-balling between one-half of the school against the other half, with Dempsey commanding the opposite faction, was the very thing for Dick to enter into with ardour. For us, who are getting on in years, and who wear spectacles, there is, however, scarcely a more repulsive amusement: next to being inadvertently launched upon a slide on the foot-pavement, and beholding, as our legs are leaving us in different directions, a crowd of miscreants bearing down upon us with a hideous velocity, there is nothing more objectionable than to find ourselves in a snow-ball scrimmage. The extreme hardness of the missiles themselves is one consideration; but that is trifling (in the eyes of a philosopher), compared to the exhibition of vindictive passion which accompanies their flight: the visage of each combatant betrays a wish that he were throwing Greek fire or Armstrong shells instead of snow, and seems to grudge every moment that is spent in the manufacture of his diabolical weapon. We have seen one of such savages so maddened by the artificial avalanche, as to rush upon a small boy who had had nothing whatever to do with it, and rub a handful of snow into the back of his neck with an energy which, if it had been frost-bitten, would have been benevolence itself. Not a few dogs—whose characteristic, as the poet tells us, is delight in strife—are similarly stirred to the depths of their brutal nature by snow, and will roll and growl in it, with evident regret that the formation of their fore-paws forbids their using it as an engine of destruction. It is probable, if certain theories be true, that these animals may have once been school-boys, who have perished in their early youth in a snow-scrimmage.

'They've been and broken my nose,' cried Johnnie Arbour on a sudden, exhibiting that feature to his brother in a flattened condition, and with a perceptible dint where the snow-shell had exploded and burst in all directions over his face, like the radiations of a broken window: 'they've broken my nose, Dick, and I am sure they're putting stones in their snow-balls.'

'The deuce they are!' cried Dick, whose caning had not cured him of strong language—'then two can play at that game, Johnnie; so here goes.'

The brothers threw together.

A great cry immediately arose from the opposite ranks. A scanty mizzle succeeded to the storm of snow-balls, and then altogether ceased. General William Dempsey had fallen backwards, as falls on Mount Avernus the thunder-smitten oak, and a crowd gathered around him, exclaiming: 'Dempsey's eye's out!' 'Dempsey's blinded with a stone!' 'Dempsey's dead!'

Johnnie Arbour turned as white as his shirt-collar—and indeed whiter, for the occurrence happened upon a Saturday—'I threw no stone, Dick,' said he.

Dick lost his colour too, as he replied: 'I'm very sorry, I'm sure, but I didn't aim at him in particular.'

'Who put a stone into his snow-ball?' cried the captain of Richard's side.

'I did,' responded the lad sturdily; 'the fellows upon Dempsey's side began it though.'

An indignant hiss broke forth from those about the injured youth, and especially from such as had been guilty of the practice complained of. The rest were naturally angry that poor Dempsey should have been even alluded to by young Bumptious, at such a time. He had been often heard to vow that he would be even with Dempsey, and he had now, it was evident, taken advantage of a public scrimmage to avenge a private wrong. Even those of his own side who were yet about him, fell away from him; and presently,

Brother Johnnie, after a few moments of vacillation, hung his head down, and slinked away, leaving poor Dick standing alone.

There was much hardship, and wrong, and sorrow lying between Richard Arbour and that rest which at last befalleth the most weary of us; but perhaps he was not doomed to experience a moment so intensely wretched as that present one, when friend and brother had forsaken him, and he stood alone in the playground of Messrs Dot and Carriwan—the Black Sheep of that youthful fold.

#### SYRIAN SILK AND SILK-REELING.

DID you ever, in the streets of London, observe some of the retinue of the Turkish ambassadors with gaudy silk *bosheas* or handkerchiefs girt round their heads, or rich shawls encircling their waists? Both these are mostly the produce of Syrian labour: for, of a truth, silk is the staff of life to all classes and creeds inhabiting that land, from the ancient shores of Tyre, over Lebanon, right away to the fertile and lovely plains of Antioch. A universal patron-saint amongst all these people would be that stout-hearted old monk—if they had ever heard about him, which they have not—who, with hollow staff in hand, well piled up with silk-worm eggs, at risk of life, wended his weary way from distant China over the bleak steppes of Tartary, and so conveyed to Europe the much-treasured secret of the avaricious Celestials. Then only monarchs revelled in the luxury of silk garments; now the poorest and most ill-used peasant in Lebanon, and in the plains of North Syria, would deem himself a disgrace to the village if his wife could not sport a new silk dress at least once a year—on Easter Day—and he himself a girdle of the same material; very gay, indeed, as regards variety of colours.

No sooner has the short-lived winter blown its last gale from the westward, which occurs early in February, than the whole of animated nature seems to wake up by common consent into life and activity. Peasants who, like their cocoons, have been almost hermetically sealed up in their huts for the last three months, enter vigorously upon the labours and the duties necessary for the forthcoming spring and summer. The birds, who have never quitted the place, although so long silent, now burst forth into songs of praise, and trees and shrubs are covered with buds. Amongst the earliest of the latter is the mulberry, which is no sooner clad with delicate leaves, so appropriate for their food, than the mites of silk-worms issue by countless thousands from the eggs, and are immediately placed in small round flat baskets covered with clay, where they are forthwith supplied with the tender leaves of the mulberry. The peasant and his family have now commenced the duties of the year. As day by day the leaf increases in size, so the silk-worms rapidly grow in proportion, till from having been almost invisible mites, and then the size of ants, in the course of a week they attain to nearly half an inch in length, and have to be transferred to baskets of double the size of the first ones. Meanwhile the peasant and his wife have had no sinecures. Whilst the former has been busy in remedying what damages the *khooks* may have received during the winter gales, the latter, aided by her children, has gathered at intervals the necessary supply of food for the worms; being careful first that the leaves should be perfectly dry, because one drop of dew amongst the leaves would be fatal to a whole basketful of worms. The *khooks* above referred to are long, narrow, slight structures of twigs and leaves intertwined, and supported at intervals by stout stems of old and useless mulberry-trees; while the roofing is composed of thick layers of rushes, so plentiful in the marshy lands, which are perfectly impervious to rain; for, on the one hand, whilst the worms must be effectually protected from rain or dews, on the other

hand, they require a free circulation of air, a point which is attained by the net-work structure of the sides of the *khook*. The interior consists of a number of shelves on either side, which are made of a species of slit-reed matwork, and rise one above another in tiers of from three to four, according to the size of the *khook*, the lowest being at least two feet from the floor, and the uppermost about a foot from the roof. These shelves are called *batoors*, and according to their number is reckoned the wealth of the proprietor, and the quantity of silk they will produce; thus, in speaking of any particular mulberry-plantation, the natives, in bargaining, regulate its worth by saying: 'Oh, it has only so many *batoors*, and can therefore only produce such a number of *rotolos* of silk;' the *rotolo* being equivalent to five and a half pounds English.

To these *khooks*, after the expiration of two weeks or so, the worms are removed, and spread upon the *batoors* above alluded to, which have first been carefully and thickly lined with mulberry-leaves, to prevent the worms from falling through. There is no fear of their straying over the sides, or climbing from one shelf to another; silk-worms are instinctively home-loving creatures, and will never of their own accord budge an inch from where they are first placed, until the time arrives when they are about to become cocoons. Soon after this final transfer of the worm, commences that strange phenomenon of apparent utter lifelessness, which lasts for forty-eight hours, during which interval the creature is changing its first skin, having outgrown its India-rubber capacities. The natives call this the first *soame*, or fast; and the Christian part of them, especially the Greeks, look upon this as a certain indication that the worms are of the same creed as themselves. During these *soames*, which are three in number, at intervals of about a fortnight each, the worms require no food, and the peasant occupies himself in the tillage of the ground, whilst his family devote themselves to domestic pursuits. As they approach maturity, the appetite of the worms becomes prodigious, and early and late has the peasant to labour, lopping down huge branches of the mulberries, till what was a verdant and beautiful plantation some six weeks before, is now a wilderness of leafless stems and branches. But so congenial is the climate, and so fertile the soil, that in less than a month afterwards, fresh sprouts are covered with tender leaves, so that in autumn so thick is the foliage, so stout the branches, that the stranger would never guess how recently they had been lopped. When the first leaves in winter begin to fall, then are the trees again denuded of their foliage. This time, however, the branches are spared, and the leaves gathered by hand, and stored up against winter, when, with the manure of the worms, they serve as fodder for the oxen, which would otherwise starve. The branches lopped off at first form a vast and plentiful supply of firewood for the peasant's family.

The third and last *soame*, or fast of the worms, is the signal for the peasant to bestir himself, and procure as much brushwood as he can, which, when dried in the sun, he throws lightly upon the *batoors*. During this interval, the worms have become of a transparent golden colour, and the moment they wake up again, for the first time in their lives assume a migratory disposition. Up they crawl actively over this bramble, down the next, until each one has selected a fitting spot amongst the twigs for forming its cocoon; and very wonderful is it to watch the nicety and care with which they weave round themselves that impenetrable texture which constitutes the cocoon. I say very wonderful is it to watch them, but the peasant won't allow us so to do: the *Evil Eye* is his dreadful ogre; so, to guard against this, he locks the door, and flings against it from outside a huge mass of clay. From this act he also divines

whether the harvest will be propitious or otherwise. If the clay adheres *en masse*, it is a good omen; if it drops off partly, a bad one; if the whole falls to the ground, it is destruction.

And now, whilst the little industrious worms are hard at work weaving their own winding-sheets, the peasantry are not one whit less busy preparing for them a cruel death. Huge, antique-looking, dusty old wheels, which have been hidden for the last twelve months, are brought to light again, and brushed up; the temporary furnace of last year is repaired, the reservoir of water fresh lined with clay, the whole uncouth apparatus set up, and the peasant's rickety old stool placed ready against the first day of reeling. All the family find occupation one way or another, and piles of fuel are heaped up hard by, ready to feed the furnace. At last the auspicious morning arrives, and with many prayers and ceremonies, the door of the khook is opened, when men, women, and children set to work, denuding the briers of the cocoons, which are piled in scores upon scores of baskets. Then the *mousoom*, or silk-harvest, commences in right-down earnest.

It is a glorious and a happy sight, in that pleasant country, at this peculiar season of the year, to witness the smile that all nature seems to wear. The whole air is redolent with the odours of countless sweet-scented flowers, the whole earth carpeted with emerald, brilliantly bespangled with tiny flowers of various hues; gaudy butterflies are flitting to and fro from woodbine to woodbine; fruit-trees are in blossom, and myriads of song-birds are waking the echoes in valley and dale; and here, seated under the clear blue canopy of heaven, are picturesque groups rivaling the birds in their ceaseless song, and accompanying themselves with the whizz of the huge wheels upon which they are winding off the silk-worms. One turns the wheel with uncouth handle; another feeds it with the worms; another stirs up the worms, being reeled with something like a schoolmaster's birch-rod; a fourth feeds the fire; a fifth supplies the basin with water as it becomes exhausted; a sixth renovates the basket with fresh cocoons; whilst near by, seated on a mat, are two or three occupied in picking the stuff from off the outside of the cocoons; and this material is known as cotton-silk. They labour hard and long, but with good-will, during the first week after the cocoons are formed, since they obtain 30 per cent. more silk now than they will after that date, because then the cocoons have to be stifled, to prevent the moths—into which they are rapidly being converted—boring through the cocoons, and so rendering them utterly valueless and unavailable. The process of stifling is with the cocoon as simple as is the system of reeling. Spread out upon mats, the cocoons are exposed to the fierce heat of the mid-day sun for a day or two, being carefully turned at intervals during the process, and this answers quite as well as the ovens so indispensable in less congenial climes where the silk-worm is reared. After this process, the silk-reelers take it more easily, and relapse into their oriental apathy. They know now that were they to work ever so hard, they cannot abstract one thread more of silk from the suffocated cocoons, and there is no fear of the moths boring their way through. Day by day, however, the scene becomes more picturesque, as golden festoons of newly reeled silk are suspended from branch to branch to dry, and set off the beautiful foliage of the orange and the lemon trees. The stench, however, becomes intolerable from the heaps of dead and reeled-off cocoons, and swallows up all the sweet odours that nature has planted around. By this method of reeling, they are supposed to obtain about one pound of silk from every five and a half of live cocoons, and just half that amount from those that have been stifled. The silk is all reeled off by the middle of June, when it is immediately sold on the

spot to brokers, who have been hovering about like vultures for the last few weeks, and these again dispose of it to merchants, who ship it for Lyon and other European ports, where, under skilful hands, it is soon converted into that costly material which ladies love to wear. In the interim, the cocoons left for seed have been perforated by the beautiful short-lived, white, velvety-looking moths into which the silk-worm has been converted. By instinct, the males and females come together; the former die off within an hour or so; the latter may linger on for a day, in which interval, on linen spread for their especial behoof, they deposit an incredible amount of eggs, which constitute the peasant's supply of seed for the next season. When these are perfectly dry, they are carefully scraped off into a linen bag, and suspended from the ceiling of the peasant's hut, where they will remain undisturbed for a twelvemonth to come.

Of late years, wonderful improvements have been made in the quantity and quality of Syrian silk by the erection of European factories and the introduction of European machinery. At one of these—the factory of a Frenchman (M. de Portales)—thousands of unhappy and fugitive Maronites found refuge during the recent terrible massacres in the Lebanon.

#### THE CURIOSITIES OF CIVILISATION.

THAT wonderful economy of manufacture which is rapidly depriving the word 'rubbish' of its meaning, and which puts the most apparently hopeless material through so many processes, until not even the paper-manufacturer can make anything out of what is left, has of late extended itself to periodical literature. Formerly, when a professional man contributed to a review or a magazine, he either concealed the fact altogether, as likely to prejudice his clients against him, or was content with that limited cyclone of reputation—the likeliest, however, of all, to sink an ill-ballasted craft—which blows only from one's own relatives and acquaintance. But now that society has grown wiser, and a lawyer is not thought much the worse of for giving us a Biography, or a physician for recording his Notes of Travel, all men are hastening to acknowledge their intimacy with literature, and to publicly recognise their neglected offspring, which aforesaid were suffered to stray among the periodicals, nameless, and even fathered upon the wrong persons. Perhaps that last reason has been the most efficient in compelling the soft self-impeachment from so many professional bosoms. They could have stood by calmly enough and seen their little ones treated with contempt and contumely, for they invited such possible treatment by their public appearance, but, valueless or not, they were still *theirs*—a poor thing, but mine own—and to behold a stranger patting them on their heads with paternal complacency, was more than they could bear. Our system of anonymous publication is exceedingly prolific of this sort of literary pretender. Within our own private range of acquaintance, we know more than one intellectual-looking individual, who, thanks to a high forehead, and an artistic manner of knitting it, has a reputation for writing articles in the *Times*, the *Edinburgh*, and (especially) in the *Westminster Review*, which the editors themselves by no means identify as his. It is not necessary for a person thus gifted by nature to assert himself categorically as the author of this or that article—although even such statements are not unexampled, and when a man once begins to make them, he rarely stops, until he meets with the



real Simon Pure, when there is a 'difficulty'—for a shake of the head, with a smile to follow, will answer the same purpose; or, still better, a semi-deprecatory verbal denial. We should say, judging from our own experience, that in the case of all anonymous literary successes, there are, to every work, at least a score of supposititious authors. Until the Reprint comes out, with the writer's name, anybody is of course at liberty to assume its paternity, and if none does come out, to keep it. But in the meantime, all kinds of unpleasant things take place.

The practices of these impostors create suspicions of the claim of the real proprietor. We remember to have heard of some clever amateur-draughtsman who had among his friends the reputation of being considerably superior to the Great Delineator of Social Life in *Punch*, and to have exhibited his superiority in that very journal. One particular picture, acknowledged by the gentleman himself to be his work, was excessively extolled, so that in it his provincial fame may be said to have culminated. Consider, therefore, his indignant dismay, and the ill-concealed delight of his good-natured friends, when the Great Delineator published his collected sketches with this very drawing included among them! 'This humbug, then, has never drawn a picture in *Punch* in his life,' was the universal verdict upon the unhappy amateur. Whereas the fact was, he had really been a contributor—although not to the extent which was believed at home—and the work of art in question had been included by mistake among the Great Contributor's own. Such a case as this, however, is exceedingly rare, and the reputations which are blasted by the reprints of what were previously anonymous articles, for the most part, only get their just deserts. The appearance of the *Curiosities of Civilisation*\* will put an end to a good many famous folks of this sort. The hand that has lightened the *Quarterly* for the last five years, and kept it afloat upon the ocean of popularity in spite of the general density of its contents, is at last known. Those articles of present attraction upon *Advertisements*, the *Zoological Gardens*, the *London Commissariat*, the *Electric Telegraph*, and the *Police and the Thieves*, which have brought it abreast of the age, may now all be safely attributed to Dr Andrew Wynter. For our own parts, we generally prefer a professional to an amateur writer, and rather mistrust such essays as are composed 'in the intervals of business;' but certainly these could hardly have been better done. Dr Wynter has accomplished the difficult task of writing freshly and vividly upon subjects familiar to all, and on which everybody has had their thought, and very many of us their 'say.' He has spared, too, neither time nor pains in acquiring the most minute information. What reams of ancient newspapers must he have dived into—among notices of runaway Negro boys, such as Hogarth painted; of mounted guides to point the way to Bristol, such as Pepys writes of; of apprentices missing, and 'supposed to be slain in some of those fights in Surrey' during the Commonwealth; and of that new liquor 'called by the Chineseas Teha, and by other nations Tay, also Tee'—before he came upon this dog-advertisement of the time of Charles II., in the *Mercurius Politicus*, and written, there seems little doubt, with his own royal hand. It is the second notice of the loss of the animal, and is printed very prominently in large Italic type.

*'We must call upon you again for a Black Dog, between a Grey-hound and a Spaniel, no white about him, only a streak on his Breast, and Tayl a little bobbed. It is His Majesties own Dog, and doubtless was stolen, for the Dog was not born nor bred in England, and would*

*never forsake his Master. Whosoever findes him may acquaint any at Whitehal, for the Dog was better known at Court than those who stole him. Will they never leave robbing His Majesty? must he not keep a dog? This Dogs place (though better than some imagine) is the only place which nobody offers to beg.'*

Dr Wynter's intention in his first essay is to draw out, as a thread from some woollen fabric, a continuous line of advertisements from the earliest age of the newspaper press till the present; and by so doing, to shew how distinctly, from its dye, the pattern of the age through which it runs is represented; and in this he more or less succeeds. We should be astonished now-a-days to see in the *Times* a notice from the *Gazette*, headed Buckingham Palace, such as this in the *Public Intelligencer* of 1664:

*'WHITEHALL, May 14, 1664. His Sacred Majesty, having declared it to be his Royal will and purpose to continue the healing of his people for the Evil during the Month of May, and then to give over till Michaelmas next, I am commanded to give notice thereof, that the people may not come up to Town in the Interim and lose their labour.'*

In the next year, the papers advertise quackeries less magnificent, for the cure of the Plague, which is then devastating the capital. There are no more inquiries after lockets and perfumed bags, and 'ladies' pictures set in gold;' no more publication of amorous songs; no more offerings of ten shillings the ounce to tempt any who are happy enough to possess long flaxen hair to part with it, in order that 'perrywigges' should be made for persons of condition. In the time of the first George, we were a nation none too nice and delicate in our tastes, if we may judge from our public exhibitions. 'Tryals of Skill' at his majesty's bear-garden were common between such champions as these. 'Edmund Button, master of the noble science of defence, who hath lately cut down Mr Hasgit and the Champion of the West, and 4 besides, and James Harris, an Herefordshire man, master of the noble science of defence, who has fought 98 prizes and never was worsted, to exercise the usual weapons, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon precisely.—*Postman*, July 4, 1701.' Worse than this, we encouraged pugilism among the fair sex. In a public journal of 1722, we find the following gage of battle thrown down and accepted:

*'CHALLENGE.—I, Elizabeth Wilkinson, of Clerkenwell, having had some words with Hannah Hyfield, and requiring satisfaction, do invite her to meet me upon the stage, and box me for three guineas; each woman holding half-a-crown in each hand, and the first woman that drops the money to lose the battle.'*

*'ANSWER.—I, Hannah Hyfield, of Newgate Market, hearing of the resoluteness of Elizabeth Wilkinson, will not fail, God willing, to give her more blows than words, desiring home blows, and from her no favour: she may expect a good thumping!'*

The half-crowns in the hands were to prevent the ladies from scratching one another, should natural disposition get the better of scientific training.

Let us hurry out of such times as these into a softer atmosphere, and listen to the seductive voice of Mr George Robins, which charmed the early part of this present century. On one occasion, in puffing an estate, he is said to have described a certain ancient gallows which chanced to be upon it as 'a hanging wood;' on another, he had made the beauties of the Earthly Paradise which he was commissioned to dispose of to the highest bidder rather too enchanting, and found it necessary to blur it by a fault or two, lest it should prove 'too bright and good for human nature's daily food.' 'But there are two drawbacks to the property,' sighed out this Hafiz of the Mart—'the litter of the rose-leaves, and the noise of the nightingales.'

\* *Curiosities of Civilisation*. Reprinted from the *Quarterly and Edinburgh Reviews*. By Andrew Wynter, M.D. Hardwicke, London.

After laying before us a selection of "the strangest advertisements he can pick out of the *Times* newspaper, and maliciously disclosing the ciphers under which young people are sometimes accustomed to make love in that romantic organ, Dr Wynter startles us with the sums *per annum* spent by certain adventurous dealers, in advertising. 'Professor' Holloway (whose modest self-commendations we remember to have lately met with even in an obscure Spanish paper) spends no less than L.30,000; Moses and Son, L.10,000; Rowland and Son (Macassar oil, &c.), L.10,000; Dr De Jongh (cod-liver oil), L.10,000; Heal and Sons (bedstead and bedding), L.6000; and Nicholls (tailor), L.4500.

Next to the essay to which we have been referring, that upon the supply of food for London is perhaps the most interesting. The article of greatest importance (next to strawberries) which is produced by the market-gardeners is pease. The dealers, in order to consult the convenience of hotel-keepers, and such as require a large supply for the table, keep them ready for the sauce-pan. There is no wonder that at mid-day, in Covent Garden, we see that army of amazons engaged in shelling pease, when we read that one salesman often employs four hundred at this occupation. 'The major part of these auxiliaries belong to the poor-houses around; they obtain permission to go out for this purpose; and the shilling or eighteen pence a day earned by some of the more expert, is gladly exchanged for the monotonous rations of the parish. In the autumn, again, there will be a row of poor creatures, extending along the whole north side of the square, shelling walnuts, each person having two baskets, one for the nuts, another for the shells, which are bought by the catsup-makers. The poor flock from all parts of the town directly a job of the kind is to be had. If a fog happens in November, thousands of link-boys and men spring up with ready-made torches; if a frost occurs, hundreds of men are to be found on the Serpentine and other park waters, to sweep the ice or to put on your skates: there are, in the busy part of the town, half-a-dozen fellows ready of a wet day to rush simultaneously to call a cab "for your honour;" and every crossing when it grows muddy almost instantly has its man and broom. A sad comment this upon the large floating population of starving labour always to be found in the streets of London.' Of foreign pine-apples, nearly 300,000 are consigned to one London house, and a fleet of clippers is appropriated solely to the carriage of this single fruit. Water-cresses do not grow necessarily in 'purling brooks,' it seems. The extensive Camden Town beds are planted in an old-brick-field, watered by the Fleet Ditch, and owe their unusually luxuriant appearance to a certain admixture of the sewerage. Rhubarb, it appears, was introduced into London only some forty years since by Mr Miatt, who sent his sons to the Borough Market with five bunches of it, whereof they only sold three. He continued their cultivation, however, despite the universal sneers at his 'physic pies,' and hundreds of tons of it are now sold in Covent Garden yearly. Sometimes, although very rarely, London cannot eat quite all that comes to its table. 'As we gazed, on one occasion, upon the solid walls of baskets extending down the market, crowned with parquets of peach and nectarine boxes, we wondered in our own minds whether it would ever be all sold, and the wonder increased as wagon after wagon arrived, piled up as high as the second-floor windows of the piazza. Venturing to express this doubt to a lazy-looking man who was plaiting the strands of a whip, "Blessee, sir," he replied, without looking up from his work, "the main part on 'em will be at Brummagem by dinner-time." True enough, while we had been guessing and wondering, a nimble fellow had run to the telegraph and inquired of Birmingham and a few distant towns whether they were in want of certain

fruits that morning. The answer being in the affirmative, the vans turned round, rattled off to the North-western station; and in another hour the superfluity of Covent Garden was rushing on its way to fill up the deficiency of the midland counties. Thus the wire and steam, both at home and abroad, cause the supply to respond instantly to the demand, however wide apart the two principles may be working.'

If some sensitive persons may have received a shock in learning the manner in which their water-cresses are grown, they will, on the other hand, be comforted to learn that the popular notion which ascribes the flavour of London porter to Thames water, is a vulgar error. 'Not even the Messrs Barclay, who are upon the stream, draw any of their supply from that source, but it is got entirely from wells, and those sunk so deep, that they and the Messrs Calvert, whose brewery is half a mile distant upon the opposite side of the river, find they are rivals for the same spring. When one brewery pumps, it drains the wells of the other, and the firms are obliged to obtain their water on alternate days.' Certainly, if any man ever deserved the thanks of his fellows for purveying knowledge pleasantly, and not in that indigestible mass of facts and figures with which we are so often treated, it is Dr Andrew Wynter. He understands exactly how to pick for us the plums out of the mince-pie, and may with justice be entitled the 'Little Jack Horner' of Information.

#### 'VERY CHEAP, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!'

'VERY cheap, sir, remarkably; best French silk hat, glossy as the raven's wing! The genuine article!'

I ventured to observe that it was, if anything, a little *too* glossy.

'All the beauty of it, sir; exquisite finish, delicate polish! We are making an enormous sacrifice, of course, in offering them at the price; but the fact is we are so determined to clear off the whole stock—enlargement of premises—extension of business. Where shall I send it, sir?'

'Why, I am not quite determined.'

'Oh, of course, certainly. We have no necessity to entreat custom; but it is scarcely usual, when a gentleman has looked over our whole stock, to—'

In short, I took out my purse, paid for the glossy best silk hat, and putting my travelling-cap into the crown, walked away under it. Certainly, it was very cheap.

'And if, sir,' said the bowing shopman, 'any little accident should happen, a damp cloth and a cool iron—new again, quite! Much obliged.'

I do not think any 'little accident' happened to my purchase; I was not aware of anything of the kind, but certainly the bloom of the peach was transitory and perishing. I examined it. I caused the experiment of the damp cloth and cool iron to be tried. Worse and worse. I shook my head at it, and under it; I consulted an obscure member of the hatting profession, who lived in a dull court through sundry back-streets, and he shook *his* head at it even more grimly. There was nothing to be done.

My hat had but one fault: it was bought in a moment of weakness at a ticketeer's shop—a bargain! Of course, my case must be the exception, not the rule; if every one's first bargain turned out to be suffering so unmistakably from chronic weakness, and a general flabbiness of constitution, as mine did, I opine it would be, as mine assuredly will, the last as well as the first. But—'a bargain!' There is something so delightfully suggestive about the word, so

beautifully undefined, and provocative of curiosity. 'Oh, let me see it. Where did you get it? What did you give? I do so dote on bargains!'

And if I presume to tell the 'doter' the story of a hat, I get snubbed, and told that 'it served me right for being so gullible.' There may be something in that, to judge from the marvellous fascination which seems to hang about the word; there *must* be something in it.

Look at the lady descending from her carriage with her friend, at the door of Swan and Edgar's; from her dress and the air there is about her, you would never suspect it, but she is an inveterate bargain-hunter. She goes with her friend to Swan and Edgar, and her brougham stands not unfrequently before Lewis and Allenby's, but she does her own private shopping in other quarters. She has a tact, too, in her management of these affairs, which you would not suspect from her *insouciant* remarks upon the costly silks amongst which her friend is lingering undecided. She likes to stumble upon an establishment recently opened; she will examine the articles produced by the anxious young proprietor with supreme indifference, and raise her eyebrows superciliously at the price indicated. Then she lifts her gold-rimmed eye-glass, and looks through it all round, as though she were in a state of bewilderment at finding herself in such a place. She 'doesn't remember a mercer's house in this locality.' And then the proprietor says nervously, that it is only very lately established; to which she replies, 'Indeed!' with a significant, 'And the price of this embroidered robe is actually'—

O infatuated young tradesman! O blindworm! He fancies this noble lady may perhaps give him her custom, so he sells the embroidered robe, and after that another valuable article, and another—for she is not satisfied with a moderate spoil—at or even under cost price, for the sake of securing her patronage; and a little later in the day she is to be seen exhibiting her bargains, and triumphing over them.

'I shall be ruined pretty shortly, at that rate,' says the young fellow, with a bluish look about the lips. But my lady did not hear that, nor perhaps would it have much distressed her if she had.

There is another side of the bargain-question to be looked at.

I should like you to come with me, my lady, and just glance into a place which I shall point out to you. Ay, gather up the nineteen founces, and take out the essence-bottle; you will need it, I promise you. Take care also of these monstrous circular deformities which rub so unyieldingly upon the legs of unfortunate foot-passengers. Put down your veil—not that it is of much use, a poor flimsy thing—keep the *vinaigrette* to your nostrils, and do not put up the eye-glass, for you will see only too well without it.

I imagine you behind me in this horrible neighbourhood—you, fresh from scented Belgravia—in this horrible atmosphere of all uncleanness, where the stolid children crouch on dirt-heaps, poking after some impurity which was edible once, and cramming it in their mouths, dismally. *These*, children? You think of the rosy little lips and the prattle, the fresh bright eyes and downy cheeks; of the dainty little robes, the pretty kid-shoes you love to hear pattering about you—*these*, children!—keep up the *vinaigrette*. Blood trickles from under the doors of slaughter-houses, scenting the air; the reeking odours of the gin-palace mingle with it, and meet your shuddering sense; and the very black-browed houses are rotting down in filth to their decay. Look at the drabbed women who enter those doors, and come out minus a garment, but with fiery breath and soddened face, out of which the lacklustre eyes stare at you with a dull wonder: look at the very babies all muddled with gin, which the mothers pour down their throats to 'comfort them,' from their squalling weakened

birth (I was going to say 'cradle!'): think of the miasmata flying off from the combined heaps of stale vegetables, putrefying fish, flesh both stale and freshly killed! What marvel that disease should brood darkly over the festering alley?

But what has all this to do with bargains, you ask? Patience, madam. I have lingered unwarrantably amongst the horrors of the *locale* we are in. This is the place I meant you to peep into—the house opposite the gin-palace. It is not a pleasant house by any means; there is nothing inviting about its aspect; and you perceive, on entering, that the staircase forms a common sewer for the different sets of lodgers. Look into this room—large enough, certainly, but low, ill-ventilated, desolate, and miserable beyond description. Four families in this one room—thirty human beings sweltering here together. You hear the incessant click of the needle, varied by an occasional cough, and a dull moaning cry from some one stretched on the floor; you sicken in the foul air of the place. Some of these creatures have clothes, some rags; some have had food to-day, some have not; but they are all hungry.

Look at them—feel their arms, and wonder. Are they flesh and blood, or old bones covered with a dry, unhealthy skin?

'O Lord,' cries out one of these girls, 'he says people won't give the price! He lets them have 'em bargains, and he must lower my pay. Lower it!'

Oh, think what a girlhood this is!

Ay, you may well gasp at the pestiferous atmosphere; but think what it is to live in it, to slave in it, to hunger, and stitch, and die in it!

Mind, I am not saying that all this is your fault, my lady, or even that it is remediable, but I do say that every time you squabble and chaffer for bargains, you lay a finger heavily on the weight, which is great enough already for the backs that bear it; and I think if you—representing that one half of the world which is at its ease and luxurious, whose great complaint is that it has nothing to do—could know how the other half lives, you would find the excitement of bargain-hunting dearly purchased by its possible results.

To leave the sentimental—though, Heaven help them, it is no sentiment to the sufferers—here is another species of the same tribe, a lady rather lower in the social scale than you, madam, of the uncountable founces. You may recognise her by the way in which she looks in at the shop-windows; she examines the tickets inquisitively; she is always on the *qui vive* for an opportunity. If it strikes her that something is cheap, she will buy it, even if it is perfectly useless to her. 'Such a bargain! Couldn't let that slip, you know.' So she wastes a lot of money by way of being economical.

She is not aristocratic in her tastes, nor particular about the style or locality of the shops she goes to; she will even snap greedily at a window all white-washed, and with a huge 'selling off' daubed on it; and she is in the constant habit of bantering the shopkeepers, only it is done in a less polite and elegant manner than yours, my lady.

'Of course we must bargain,' you say. 'Other people do it, and we must.'

Dear ladies, if that is to be a rule, you may as well get intoxicated. Other people do it.

But besides the evil consequences of hurried and ill-paid work-people, do you believe in bargains?

I don't a bit. There are exceptions, of course; but in a general way you will be better treated, and quite as economically, if you are satisfied to pay a fair price for your articles, and get them because they are necessary, not because they are bargains.

I have no intention of advocating cheating and trickery, but I confess that when I see casually a little fluttering exhibition of drapery, and hear a 'Got it so cheap,' and then a whisper; knowing what



the whisper is, I wish devoutly—I can't help it—that the bargain, whatever it is, may turn out like my 'glossy, highly polished, genuine best silk hat.'

### A NIGHT IN THE WOODS.

THE events which form the subject of the following sketch occurred during a sojourn of three months with a surveying-party in one of the wildest districts of Canada. We were occupied in tracing the course of a hitherto unexplored river, which unfolded to us a succession of scenic effects, such as would have delighted an artist and poet, and which they only could describe.

It would be difficult to convey to the reader who has not bivouacked out in the woods, the luxury of those evenings around the camp-fire.

After a deal of story-telling, we all turned in for the night—that is, we rolled ourselves in our blankets, and fell asleep with our feet towards the fire.

The stories told upon the evening I have in my mind, had all been about wolves, some of which rapacious creatures were said to be then in our neighbourhood. Owing, perhaps, to my imagination having been excited by these tales, I had a terrible nightmare. I dreamed that wolves were pursuing me; I knew they were gaining on me: I could hear their howls growing more and more distinct. There is a point of agony at which all dreams must have an end—I awoke with a terrible start, and found myself bathed in a cold sweat, and a prey to a sense of terror for which I could not account. Instead of the cheerful blaze which I had seen ere I fell asleep, all was now cold and dark. The fire had sunk to a heap of red embers. I could not distinguish one of my sleeping companions. Good Heavens! can I be still slumbering? There, again, is the long low wailing howl which I heard so distinctly in my dream.

I sit up erect, and listen. What is that sound? a rustling among the brushwood—some of the party stirring? No. All are silent as the grave. I am the only one awake in the camp. Once again! Surely I am mistaken. I thought the fire was nearer to me, just in front; and so it is. What, then, can be those two glimmering lights a few yards off? Now they are moving! I awake the nearest sleeper—an American named Silas Wood. The man starts to his feet, rubs his eyes. 'What is it?' 'Look there, Silas,' he looks, and as quick as lightning, seizes a burning fagot, and hurls it with all his force and an unerring aim. The gleaming lights disappear with a rustle of the brushwood—a sharp short bark close at hand, and then in a minute or two, the long low wail in the distance is heard.

Silas then stirred and raked the burning embers, and throwing on an immense heap of dry brush, in a second the Egyptian darkness is dispelled by a bright flame which leaps up six feet into the air, and brings the sleeping figures and the nearest trees into full relief.

'Silas, what does it all mean?' I asked.

'It means, squire,' replied the American, speaking with his usual deliberate drawl—'wolves!'

'Wolves!' I re-echoed. 'Then these two gleaming lights that I took for glowworms, were—'

'A wolf's eyes, squire; and I guess his friends wasn't fur off, awaitin' kinder anxious to hear tell of their scout. Hark! if the darned things ain't a groanin' and lamentin' over their disappointment, as sure as my name's Silas Wood.'

Once more the long low howl, inexpressibly sad and fearful, was heard at a greater distance. Now that I knew what it implied, it made the blood curdle in my veins.

'I shall never forget a wolf's howl,' I exclaimed; 'I heard that accursed sound in my dream as plainly as I hear it now. But are we not in danger?' and I began mechanically to pile up more wood on the blazing fire.

'No fears now, squire,' replied the Yankee coolly; 'the cowardly critters darasn't come anigh a fire like that. Besides, I reckon the feller I scared so with that 'ere burning chip, has told 'em it's no go by this time. They're as cunning as humans, is them critters. Ay, be off, and a good riddance to ye, ye howling varmint!' he added, as the low wail was once more heard dying away in the distance.

Notwithstanding the assurance that the wolves were retreating, I took great pleasure in seeing the fire blazing up brightly, for I knew that in that consisted our protection. 'I suppose we have had a narrow escape?' I said to my companion, who, besides myself, was the only one awake in the camp.

'I reckon I've seen a narrower, then,' replied he. 'Why that 'ere skulkin' scout darasn't have give warning to the rest of the pack as long as a single red ember remained. The critters is dreadf'ul afear'd of fire.'

'Well,' I rejoined, 'I am not at all sorry I awoke when I did. But as we're the only two awake, suppose you tell me this narrow escape you allude to—that is, if you don't feel sleepy.'

'Me, squire? I ain't sleepy, not a mossel. I couldn't sleep a wink, if I tried. I feel too kinder happy like to have cotched that darned sneak-in scout sich a lick;' and the Yankee laughed, quite tickled at the recollection. 'I guess he had it right slick atween the eyes. I knowed he felt it by the bark he gave. Well, squire, it'll give me considerable satisfaction to narrate to you my adventure with the tarnal critters. I guess, squire, it be a matter of ten year agone that Deacon Nathan had a raisin' away down to Stockville, in Vermont, where I was reared.'

'What is a raising?' I asked.

'Well, I guess it's a buildin' bee,' rejoined the Yankee.

'And, pray, what is a building bee?' I inquired, 'for I am as wise as I was before.'

'You see, squire, when you wants to get anything done up right away in a hurry all to once let, whether it's flax-beatin', or apple-parin', or corn-huskin', and the neighbours all round come and help work, that's a bee; and a buildin' bee, or a raisin', is when they want to sot up the frame of a house or a barn.'

'Oh, that's a building bee: now I understand.'

'Well, I guess it were pretty big barn that Deacon Nathan was agoin' to raise, and so we had a considerable sight of boys, and a regular spree; and when it came to draw towards night, the deacon he says to me: "Silas," says he, "I don't kinder feel easy leavin' this here barn unprotected during the dark watches of the night. The heart of man is desperately wicked, and there's some loafers in the village, and there's no end to boards and shingles lying about; and so, Silas, what'll you take to stop here all night?"

"Deacon," says I, "what'll you give?"

'Well, you see the deacon was everlastin' close where money was concerned; so he puts on a long face, and screwed his lips together, and he says very slow: "Would a dollar, Silas, be about?"

"Deacon," says I, "'tain't worth my while to stop for that; but if you like to make it four, I don't mind if I do."

"Silas Wood," says the deacon, "ain't you unreasonable? How can I rob my family to that extent?"

'You see the deacon was a remarkable pious man, and whenever he sold the men sperrits, or shoes, or flannel, or other notions out of his store, for about three times their vally, and stopped it out of their wages, he always talked about his duty to his family. Well, we chaffered and chaffered for a considerable spell, and at last we concluded to strike a bargain for two dollars and a pint of rum. The boys was a pretty well a'most cleared out, when Dave Shumyer comes to me and says: "Silas," says he, "be it true you're agoin' to stop here all night?"

"I reckon I ain't agoin' to do nothin' else," I says. "Take a fool's advice," says Dave, "and do nothin' of the sort."

"What for?" says I.

"'Cause," says he, "there's several refused; and the deacon knowed you to be a kinder desperate chap, or he wouldn't have axed you."

"Why, man alive," says I, "whar's the danger to come from?"

"Why," says Dave, "ain't you aheerd there's been wolves seen in the neighbourhood? Didn't the deacon tell you as how he lost two sheep only the night afore last? You darn't make a fire, cause of the shavings; and the barn ain't boarded up."

"Dave," says I, "don't you think to pull the wool over my eyes that fashun, and then have it to say you circumvented Silas Wood. I reckon I can read you as easy as a book. You'd like to arn them two dollars yourself. Well, now, I'll tell you what I'll do with you. Two's company: if you like to stop with me, and help me to drink the deacon's rum, you're welcome; and I don't care if I share the brass into the bargain."

"Says Dave: "I wouldn't stop a night in this here barn as it is, not for a five hundred dollar bill. Remember, Silas, I've warned you as a friend;" and away he went.

"Well, squire, I wan't goin' to let Dave scare me, 'cause I knowed he was sweet on a gal called Rini Parkins, that I were keepin' company with, and would have been considerable rejoiced to have it to tell how I had funk'd; and as I hadn't heerd tell of no wolves in them parts, I jest thought he said that by way of banter.

"Well, I made myself comfortable in the barn. It was all boarded up on three sides, and partly on the fourth; only there was a gap left for the door, big enough to let in a wagon-load of hay. It wasn't cold, bein' a fine night in the Indian summer. So I kept a strollin' up and down, takin' a look out now and agin, to see if there was anybody lurkin' about with an eye to the boards and the shingles, but there warn't a soul stirrin' but myself. Every now and agin, I'd mix myself a little grog, till the rum was all gone, and then I began to feel most everlastin' sleepy; so I thought I'd jest lie down awhile on a big pile of shavings there was in one corner of the barn. Well, squire, I dropped off, as you may suppose; and I guess it were along of what Dave Shunyser said, I got to dreamin' about wolves, till at last, blame me if I didn't dream there was one in the barn huntin' about, jest like a dog, sniffin' here and there, till at last he came to the pile of shavings where I was.

"Well, squire, I can't call to mind how I woke exactly, but the fust thing I remember I was sittin' right up on the pile of shavings, tryin' to make out as well as I could in the dark if there was anything in the barn or not. It was about a minute before I could see clearly; but at last I heard a slight rustle, and thought I saw somethin' move. Thinks I, that's Dave Shunyser, or some of the boys, come back to frighten me. They shan't have it to crow over me. So I sings out: "Is that you, Dave?" There was no answer, but I heard a rustlin' and a patter jest like a dog's paws, and I could see the critter, whatever it was, crawlin' towards the gap in the boards. Then it stopped, and kinder turned its head, and I cotched sight of two twinklin' lights, and, thinks I, it's a stray dog; when the critter give a spring out of the barn, and sot up a howl. Squire, I shouldn't have ben scared with one wolf, but that howl was answered from the woods, maybe a quarter of a mile off, by another, which I knowed could only have come from a pack of not less than fifty hungry devils. Well, squire, I was awful scared, and that's a fact; but I guess if I'd a lost my presence of mind, it would ha' been all up with me in about five minutes. I knowed I hadn't a moment to lose, 'cause I heerd the howl

comin' nearer and nearer; and the yelp yelp of the sentinel-wolf outside calling them to their prey! My first idea was to set fire to the shavings. I out with my flint and steel; but the spunk wouldn't light, and not one of the shavings would catch. The howls kept comin' nigher and nigher. Then I began to think I was gone. There was an axe in the barn, but what could I do agin fifty wolves? and in the dark, where they couldn't see my eyes to daunt them.

"I clenched it, however, and determined to sell my life dearly, when all to oncet, jest when I'd given up all hope, I feel somethin' touch agin my head—it was a rope as had ben made fast to one of the rafters. I guess, squire, if that 'ere rope had ben a foot shorter, I'd not a ben here now tellin' this story! The way I went up that rope, hand over hand, was a caution. And I'd barely swung myself on to the rafter, and begun lashin' myself to the beam with the rope, when—squire, it makes my blood run cold only to tell of it—the barn was alive with wolves, yelpin', leapin', and fallin' over each other. I could hear them routin' among the shavings; and in a minute they had all spread over the barn-floor. Then they began to nuzzle in the earth and scratch up the mould with their paws.

"At last one of 'em scented me, and told the others with a yelp. Then of all the yells I ever heard!—squire, I most swooned away; and if I hadn't lashed myself to the rafter, I'd ha' fell right down among 'em. Oh, such a yell I never heerd afore, and hope I'll never hear agin! Though I knowed they couldn't get at me, it was dreadfull to be there alone in the dead of the night, with a pack of hungry wolves lickin' their slaverin' jaws, and thirstin' for my blood. They ran round and round the barn, and leaped on to each other's backs, and sprang in to the air; but it was no use; and at last I began to get kinder easy, and I looked down on the howlin' varmin'ts, and bantered them. Squire, you'd ha' thought they understood a feller. Every time I hollered and shook my fist at them, they yelled and jumped, louder than ever. For all this, I warn't sorry when it begun to grow a little lighter; and about an hour before dawn they begin to see it was no use; so they give me one long, loud farewell howl afore they went. But, squire, the most cur'ous part of the story has got to come. Some time afore they went, it had growed so light, I could see 'em quite plain; and an ugly set of devils they was, and no mistake. Well, I noticed one wolf separate himself from the pack, and trying to slink away. He had his tail atween his legs, jest like a dog when he's beaten, and had a cowed look, as if he were ashamed and afeared like. All at oncet, he made a spring out of the barn, but the rest of the pack was after him like lightnin'.

"Squire," concluded the Yankee, laying his hand impressively on my sleeve, "you may believe it or not, jest as you please; but beyond some hide and bones, they didn't leave a piece of that 'ere wolf as big as my hand. He was the scout as give the signal to the others, and they devoured him out of hunger and revenge, 'cause they couldn't get me!"

#### INSCRIPTION FOR A SPRING.

WHOE'ER thou art that stay'st to quaff  
The streams that here from caverns dim  
Arise to fill thy cup, and laugh  
In sparkling beads about the brim,  
In all thy thoughts and words as pure  
As these sweet waters mayst thou be,  
To all thy friends as firm and sure,  
As prompt in all thy charity. C.

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